

# **EXHIBIT 137**

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# APC Raffensperger 21022

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## SPEAKERS

Brad Raffensperger, Mark Niesse, Nicole Carr

00:00

This burger was in the eye of the storm after the 2020 US presidential election when former President Trump refused to accept Georgia's election results. The Secretary TV recently including 60 minutes, CNN and the takeout. Welcome, Secretary reference burger. Today we're all good morning. We're also lucky to have two journalists with us today who have covered Georgia politics and government broadcast print in digital. Please welcome our CO moderators, Nicole Carr from ProPublica and Mark neesee. From the Georgia he's the Georgia government reporter for the Atlanta Journal Constitution. Welcome both of you in the Secretary, we are going to jump right in and get started with questions. And again, audience members. If you do have questions for the secretary, please put those in the chat or q&a function. Thanks, everybody. And we'll get started.

**Nicole Carr 00:57**

Good morning, everyone. And good morning, Secretary Raffensperger, thank you for joining us. I'll kick the questions off this morning. And we're going to start really broad with something that's been in the news recently, January 6, and we know even from a passage in your book and from reporting on the ground that day, January 6, was the day that you were escorted from the Capitol amid a stop the steel rally on the Capitol grounds. Former theater and into the Capitol looking for you that day. That there was an attack on the US Capitol. And so you've returned home and turned on the TV and saw everything that we witnessed that day. This month, the Republican Party was some folks engaging in legitimate political discourse their words in an official statement about January six, oh scene, high ranking members of the party, including Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell rejects that definition of January 6. So I'd like to know what you make of the divide in the messaging on January 6 within the party. And where you stand on that morning,

**Brad Raffensperger 02:13**

where I stand is I was back to blue. I have two nephews, I have a brother in law that had been in law enforcement, that's their career. And I'm always going to support law enforcement, what we're seeing right now, we always need to be respected. Law enforcement has a tough job. And so I'm always going to support the police. And what happened attack on police officers at the Capitol, you know, is rendus. In fact, a young lady that went to a Christian high school here in Georgia, graduated from UGA, and

then she joined the Capitol police that she was one of the first people that was attacked by the mob and end up with a concussion. And so we gave her an award for being an outstanding GA citizen, always gonna stay on the phone enforcement.

**Nicole Carr 02:52**

What do you make of the divide of the messaging within the party at this point?

**Brad Raffensperger 02:57**

Well, we're going through a process right now and at the end of the day will come out stronger, better and unified. But we do need a positive, uplifting message. And I think people are looking for principle, conservative leadership up and down the ballot. I think I've shown that I'll stand and take the slings and arrows, and I'll fight hard to make sure we have honest and fair elections in Georgia. And that's my job.

**Mark Niesse 03:21**

Right, Mr. Secretary, great to see you. Thank you again, for joining us. It's always good to talk with you and hear from you. Because you know, elections are so important. You know, along the same lines of us what Nicole was talking about, you've testified before the January 6 committee and the AJC has reported on that everything involving the fallout from the 2020 election, including Trump's call, I know you've talked about many times, and it's kind of you've been over again and again, including your book integrity counts. And I was just wondering, you know, over this last year, have your perceptions changed? And did you feel how did you perceive that phone call? Did you feel like it was threatening or coercive?

**Brad Raffensperger 04:10**

But I understand that, obviously, President Trump for some reason, I think it's because his people fed him information. And that's why January 6, I was writing a letter with my general counsel. It's a 10 page letter. And Congress has had that letter now since January 6 2021. And they have never sent any notification and they never disputed a single point in there. And it was a point by point refuting of every single allegation that was made by for example, they said there's 10,315 dead people. And all we've ever found was for there weren't 66,000 underage voters, there was actually zero. There were 1000s of felons. There's less than 74, things like that. But every allegation was made is in that letter. I wrote a book to set the record straight. I'm continuing to set the record straight. Because here's what happened. Mark. In fall of 2020 28,000, Georgians skipped the presidential ballot yet the voted down ballot in the Republican congressional airs, our Republican Congressman got 33,000 more votes than President Trump. That's what happened in Georgia, plain and simple.

**Mark Niesse 05:11**

And you talked all about a lot of the checks and investigations that your office has done since then. And now in this 2022 legislative session, there's discussion about having more GBI involvement in elections. We have a proposal the Speaker of the House, David Ralston wants to empower the GBI to intervene in election investigations. And we similar proposal by former Senator David Perdue, who is now running for governor calling for a law enforcement election policing branch. And I wanted to hear more about this idea and what you think about it because the GBI already helped the Secretary of State's office with many election investigations dealing with absentee ballots, signatures, ballot harvesting

allegations, allegations of counterfeit ballots. And with the GBI as assistants and your own office investigators. Those claims were shown not to be true. So what do you think about granting the GBI more authority to investigate in elections? And do you think it's not necessary?

**Brad Raffensperger 06:19**

Well, the fact is, what we really need is a fully funded Elections Division and a fully funded Investigation Division. Right now. We have 22 Post certified officers, and inspectors that are part of the Secretary of State's office, but only two of those are actually assigned to elections. So during the election year, what we do is we, the other 20, folks are then focused primarily on the election process, looking at infractions, violation allegations, things like that. But normally, then that pulls people off of looking at nursing engineering and all the other trades and occupations that we have, and that gets backed up. So if we had a fully funded investigation edition, that would really results back quicker. But as we shown, we'll reach out to other law enforcement agents. When we had that, you know, myth about the State Farm arena about ballot stuffing in the legality. We be shocked to both the GBI and the FBI. And the end of the day, all three of our organizations, ours, and those other organizations said that nothing happened. They're interviewed all the people and watch the full run of tape. And then President Trump's hand picked successor for the US attorney, the Northern District, Bobby Christine came up here. And he was quoted in the AJC saying I thought there'd be something there. And he dismissed that quit case quite shortly. So forcement agencies and will continue to do that, to make sure that we can get to the bottom of the truth on every single allegations made.

**Mark Niesse 07:41**

So to be clear, is that support or oppose a proposal to have GBI more jurisdiction to do election investigations in Georgia?

**Brad Raffensperger 07:50**

I believe that the Secretary of State's office should be fully funded.

**Nicole Carr 07:57**

For you need more investigators.

**Brad Raffensperger 08:00**

I believe that you have to specifically assigned for elections, and then you in effect, redirect occupations and traits, that really puts a burden on that. And obviously, what people want is they want answers quickly. And we have nearly 300 cases, we have about 40 to 50 left to come before the state election board. We've cleaned up all the backlog since I've been secretary of state. We've done yeoman's work to get this thing done. But like I said, we will investigate and we'll reach out to law enforcement agencies that they can help. Help us with, like we had up to the signature match study that we did the audit we did in Cobb County. That obviously that was it. You know, we had to reach out to GBI. And we got that done in short order. And we proved that signature match was performed. Is that sustainable

**Nicole Carr 08:46**

without more security? I know, we'll move on to other questions. But I mean, without more law enforcement involved, to continue to go back to these agencies and outside of, of the office. Well, from

**Brad Raffensperger 08:57**

a historical perspective, yes, it would be. But if you look at what happened in 2018, you know, Stacey, Abrams had her stolen election myth, which was that she was a voter suppression fact back in October, she said, just because you win doesn't mean the one that was just what, two three months ago. And so we eventually had up to 15 lawsuits from Stacey Abrams, and all three of the allied groups. Were spending an awful of time with our investigators. And then rolling forward to 2020 was voter fraud. Neither one of them are supported by facts. But if we have candidates that are running with a stolen election claims, yes, whoever it is, is going to be busy, you know, knocking these things down, because at the end of the day, what we've shown in Georgia, it's easy to vote, it's hard to cheat. We have appropriate guardrails to make sure we can identify who these voters are and we investigate and we prosecute all violators.

**Nicole Carr 09:52**

Muted there that'll bring us to SB 202. And we want to walk through voting will be different in 22 versus 20, because of the legislation, can you walk us through what you believe are the highlights of that legislation and how it will change?

**Brad Raffensperger 10:10**

Well, when I ran back to 2018, I said, we need to make sure that only American citizens vote in our elections made a verifiable paper ballot Trail, which we got. And that came in handy because we could do 100% hand recounts. And then also said, we need to be able to join the electronic registration Information Center ERIC. So we update our voter rolls, objectively, we got that also. And I said, we need to band ballot harvesting, we've got that. But the one thing we didn't get as photo ID for absentee voting. I wanted to have photo ID for all forms of voting. And we finally got that in SB 202 now we'll have photo ID driver's license number. And that's going to improve the security of that. And also voter confidence. Because, you know, so many allegations were made about, you know, the signature match, you know, was that subjective was it done things like that, but now it's photo ID based, that's good. Oh, in counties accountable. During the November election, the average wait time was two minutes in the afternoon of Tuesday, election day. And the longest I saw on the leaderboard was about 15 minutes. And that's great progress. We want to make sure the counties continued that keep mine short the one hour, we're going to use security paper for all ballots. That's a good thing that helps us shore up security and confidence. And then also, we now have accountability. If a county can't seem to run an election, we have one county that's been failing since 1993. Because we did our research, we saw the articles in the AJC going all the way back to 1993, which is nearly 30 years ago. Now there's accountability. And there's a review panel looking at Fulton County right now. And so they can improve. And if they don't approve, their board can be replaced. And they'll then have a new election director put in place. So accountability is a good thing. And so those are some of the good measures that are put in place that I think that was showing confidence, but also shore up the accuracy of what we're trying to do, keeping the third party groups from flooding voters with, you know, absentee ballot applications. But what was happening is that voters were filling out two or three or four of those, sending them to the county office not understanding that it is a problem for the county election officials. They're bogged down on paperwork. And so now if you want to vote absentee request your ballot, and you have to get it in 11 days before so that the county can process it, they can mail you your ballot, and then they you

can mail it back in or drop it off into Dropbox. drop boxes have been put into state law for the very first time. And we've actually increased early voting up to 19 days for any county at once have two additional Sunday voting 19 days versus President Biden's home state of Delaware as 10 days. We have kept no excuse absentee voting. And in Delaware, you need a doctor's permission slip to vote absentee. So it's it's like I said it's easy to vote Georgia record registrations record turnout. And yet we somehow, you know, been picked on by President Biden, but you know, we're big people we can we can fight back and we push back when President Biden says things that just aren't supported by the facts.

**Mark Niesse 12:58**

And certainly critics of SB 202 have said it would create barriers or hinder voters from going to the polls. Do you think there will be any impact on voters? Because there are a few extra steps especially on absentee voting, you know, limitations on dropboxes voter ID Do you think that will have any effect that would prevent any voters or make it a little bit more difficult for any voters to cast

**Brad Raffensperger 13:22**

their ballots? No. Because photo ID has been used for over 10 years here in Georgia for in person voting people said it was going to hurt voters hasn't happened at all back now with this peer reviewed studies show it has not decreased turnout. Well, it goes photo ID for drones with driver's license for absentee voting. They've been using that in Minnesota for now 11 years, I believe. And so they using in a blue state we're using it here in Georgia, Texas is going to use the same model. We're using driver's license, and that shorts up confidence. And then if you look at we now have 17 days mandatory of early voting, that's more than most northern. If you want to really improve voting in America, you need to look at some of these northern states not charge.

**Nicole Carr 14:05**

And I want to ask one question about the political climate as it relates to county elections boards who who run the elections? Is there concern that because of the climate and of the rhetoric and threats that election workers face in this last cycle, similar to the ones that you faced in your office, that there will be people willing to serve, and that the resources will be in place for them to run smooth elections? Because at the end of the day, that's what it boils down to who's working in the counties?

**Brad Raffensperger 14:42**

How do you turn up the poll workers first of all, to take an oath to follow the law through poll worker training, and those are really skilled professionals that are volunteering, they may get \$120 to \$150 a day as they're working out, but those are your citizens. Those are the people you At the grocery store, you see him at Rotary, Kiwanis, at your church groups out there at the ball field, those are good citizens working hard to do the job. One thing that we did find during the election of 2020 is a lot of the people that were third party or political party observers didn't understand the pole monitors didn't understand some of the rules. So now we have available poll worker training for them, so they can understand what process they're going through. So they really have that skill base, that knowledge base. So I see what they're doing right there. So we do check, check and double check to make sure that we're following the process. And making sure every all the numbers line up. And I think that'll help instill confidence in all the monitors as they're watching that process. We also have encouraged counties to make sure it's

a transparent process. And I've visited several county election offices recently. And they're adding additional windows and things like that. So people can actually observe the process. And I think that's really helpful to dispel any of that conspiracy theory stuff that happens all the time. When you have transparency, then that really helps everyone have caught what's going on.

**Nicole Carr 16:06**

We had a lot of that in the last election still resulted in those types of threats and just a really tough environment. In those polling places where we were reporting Do you think people are still willing to serve in that capacity?

**Brad Raffensperger 16:21**

I think he made the case that by and large, the level of civil discourse in America in all areas, has not been the high level that our parents or grandparents raised us to be. And so I think we really need to elevate our standards by acting, interfacing with other human beings. I think that's really important. But also, we can still be principled in our values. I'm a principled conservative, but we can have honest discussions. But number one, we want to make sure everyone's following the law and following the Constitution, that everyone has the opportunity to vote that wants to do so.

**Mark Niesse 16:56**

Okay, great, great. That's a lot about the election law passed last year Senate Bill 202. But there are a lot of ongoing proposals, you know, election legislation never stops at the Capitol because there's always room for changes and possibly improvements or not, not laws that aren't necessarily improvements. And so I wanted to hear your thoughts about some of the ideas that legislators have proposed here and the capital, one proposal to ban dropboxes entirely. They are currently allowed under SB 202. But only in person, early vote patients. There's also some legislators want more election audits. And then there's also a bill that would make ballots a matter of public record. I'm really curious what you think about this ideas?

**Brad Raffensperger 17:44**

Well, number one, banning the absentee ballot dropbox. Right now, they're inside an election office, the physical observance of election worker, I think that's much more secure. Someone's driving by the post office, probably under any kind of video surveillance, things like that. So you don't know what's happening at the post office. Plus, we know that all this state responsibility. Well, for how many years now we always moan groan about the post office. So this is a secure way of doing that. It's under the observation of a poll worker that was put into place last year with a general assembly. And I think we need to work through one election cycle, see how it works. But like I said, I've been visiting election offices, I've heard about their processes. And there will be election workers that actually watching who's dropping these things off. And when people know that, I think that really helps us, you know, instill confidence in the process.

**Nicole Carr 18:47**

Another question about the former president and his influence on the elections in the candidates this year in Georgia, we clearly see that effects in endorsements in the way that the candidate these major

races. Do you believe former President Trump's support is necessary for Republicans to secure office here? And would you seek his support?

**Brad Raffensperger 19:14**

Well, I won't be having his support because he's already supported. Congressman Jody Hice. And the challenge that Congressman Hice is going to have is that he said that all the people use the machines for his election. Those are valid votes, and they got it right. But somehow, when he got to Congress to certify a presidential race, he said something happened in the presidential race. That's a double minded person that as a pastor, he should realize that's a challenging position to be. But also as a pastor, he's held to a higher standard anyway, and he's not holding that high standard. He talks about states, states responsibilities and state sovereignty, and yet he's up there in Washington DC, over trying to overturn the will of Georgia people. And what happened in Georgia is that 28,000 Georgia, skip the president The ballot and yet voted down ballot. And the Republican Congressman got 33,000 more votes and President Trump, if anything, Congressman, I should have been out campaigning for president Trump. And so just looking out for themselves awfully selfish, I would say, wouldn't you agree?

20:17

I won't share my thoughts on that. But I do wonder if he had not endorsed Hice, would you have sought his support?

**Brad Raffensperger 20:26**

I'm running on my own merits. I've shown that I'll stand and I'll fight hard to make sure that we can update our voting system with the new, verifiable paper ballot, which allows us to do 100% hand recount. So when we did that 100% hand recount, we were to verify two things. One, is that the original scan ballot count was accurate. And also that the machines did not flip the votes. We pulled out all 5 million paper ballots put them on the table stacks of three who voted for President Trump who voted for Vice President Biden who voted for Jo Jorgensen. We added it all up, the numbers were virtually the same. And so we proved that machines did not flip the votes. We now did 100% risk limiting. And then Joseph Kirk, one of our election directors in Bartow County has done additional races, you know, just to really help instill confidence and what we're looking at rolling out additional risk limiting audits for other races in the 2022 cycle.

**Mark Niesse 21:18**

Good. You know, with the campaign, and with so many candidates running for secretary of state and challenging you, especially within your own party, I wonder how difficult that is, what is your path to victory? How do you campaign How do you convince voters, especially Republican voters, that you're the right candidate, and not your opponents?

**Brad Raffensperger 21:43**

Because I've shown that follow the law. I believe that our constitution was given to us as God inspired. And so we have a higher authority, and I believe it's God. And then we have our constitution. We don't have a king, you want a king, you go over to England, you get a king all you want, you know, you go to other places, we don't have kings, what we have is constitution. So I follow the law. I follow the Constitution, I back the blue. But also think what people are looking for is principal conservatives, not

people that just hollow rhetoric, and that just flame emotions, but actually get the job done. So we have new, verifiable paper ballot, we do risk limiting audits, we've updated the voter rolls, we're updating our voter registration database, we're continually seek improvements and making improvements in this office. We banned ballot harvesting and we've investigated, you know, hundreds and hundreds of cases every brought people before, you know that have double voted or voted in two states, things like that. And so I've shown that I'm going to make sure that we have good, honest, fair elections. But if 28,000 people decide they're not going to vote for anyone, for president, that's not my problem. That's the problem of the campaigns. And so my job is to make sure we do have fair and honest accounts.

**Mark Niesse 22:49**

Great. You mentioned ballot harvesting, which as you said is illegal in Georgia, and has been at least since 2019, when it was made illegal for anybody but a voter or a close family member, in most cases to touch or handle or deliver an absentee ballot. I've also briefly reported and we've seen it more and some conservative media about this allegation that there was some sort of ballot harvesting operation in the 2020 election and your office has opened an investigation into those claims. Can you what can you tell us about that? Is there anything to this idea that people were being paid to deliver absentee ballots to drop boxes around Atlanta? I haven't seen any evidence of this whatsoever. But I have heard the allegation, or I was wondering if there's anything to it from what you've seen and heard so far.

**Brad Raffensperger 23:42**

That's what we've heard also. So we opened up an investigation, we saw little snippets, but we have not seen the entire data file that they have, or this person is John Doe, that says that he was paid. And that requires us to get a subpoena from the state election board. Unfortunately, they had two new members, they haven't reconvened and elected the acting chairman, yet, but as soon as they do, that's one of our first requests that we get a subpoena so we can go ahead and find out who is this person? Was he paid, how much was paid and who paid him? We'll follow the money trail. We'll find out what truth is. They're like I said, we're going to make sure that we do a thorough deep dive investigation of everything awaiting to be able to file a subpoena with the state election board. They have to choose their chairman first, and that's where we are right now.

**Mark Niesse 24:26**

Does it seem a little bit suspicious or flimsy to you that supposedly somebody was paid for ballots, but nobody will say,

**Brad Raffensperger 24:32**

Oh, that's why we do investigations.

**Nicole Carr 24:40**

Before we move on to the audience questions, and when I was turning away, I was flipping through the book, I thought I'd mark this. There's a chapter that you opened up where you talk about a former longtime Georgia Secretary of State and his integrity and the legacy that he's left behind. So I want to talk about your legacy. What do you believe that will be in the near future? And history books look back on this time, decades from now

**Brad Raffensperger** 25:12

that I was an honest person and I've walked by integrity. And I did what was right. And every morning, I look in the mirror and look at myself. But even more important, I can look at my wife, Tricia, look at our kids, grandkids, and know that I did was right. And that's good enough, because eventually, we're all going to be held accountable, either in this life or the next light that comes after it. And so that's what is really important to me. You know, I'm a business person. I've been out in the business world. You know, I shared the book a little bit about Patricia and I beaten in high school. We got married halfway through engineering school, most people don't do stuff like that. But it's worked out just great for us raised a family, we lost a son. And so we've had tragedy in our family. We've also had business setbacks. But I've always wanted to lean into our faith and lean into Tricia, because as it says, a triple chord is soon not broken. So with the Lord and Tricia on my side, walking, walking with integrity, that works for me.

**Mark Niesse** 26:09

Great, great. You and your office and Georgia voters have been through so much since 2022. And we've talked a lot about changes in laws and investigations. But what do you think we should look out for in this election year? What do you think will be the biggest concerns around voting integrity and election, accuracy and voter access? As we have primaries and general elections for governor, US Senate Congress, the Georgia Legislature, Secretary of State's so many important races, what do you think are the biggest priorities and issues in your mind for this election year?

**Brad Raffensperger** 26:47

Well, I want to make sure that our election directors get out in their local counties and get explain SB 202, really specifically delivered a cut off for absentee voting so that the voters understand you have to get that in 11 days before election day, that's really important. And then we want also poll worker training for all the monitors that are kind of new, they're both political parties, third party groups, they understand what the process is. And then we also want to do additional audits. So that when there's a question, there's a close race, be it a state representative, county, commission, race, whatever it possibly could be, you know, 2022, it could be a US Senate seat, we don't know what it'll be. But that we do a risk limit audit to verify the results. So everyone at the end of the day, like I said, back in January 2020, as we were rolling out these new machines, I understand in these polarized times, that half the people are going to be happy. Half the people are going to be sad, but we want 100% people have confidence. We've been pushing back on the stolen election claims. Since Stacey Abrams, we had it in 2018, we had it in 2020. And we want to give people the confidence that yes, your person won fair and square, or, yes, your person lost fair and square. And if they lost fair and square, and come back in a couple of years to try and try and get

**Mark Niesse** 28:02

great, you mentioned audits. And I find it to be a fascinating topic, because we should want our elections to be accurate and audited and checked and verified. But sometimes, we've seen audits weaponized as a way to undermine confidence in elections. And you know, in Georgia, audits are pretty new risk limiting audits anyway, are pretty new. And we do one general election race. That's what the law calls for. Do you see a need to do more audits or different kinds of audits or more thorough

canvassing to make sure that the number of voters matches the number of ballots cast? What do you see as room for improvement in auditing elections?

**Brad Raffensperger 28:44**

Oh, those are all good processes. Like how many people showed up to vote? How many people that just check in at the at the poll pod? How many at the BMD, the ballot marking device? How many people then scan the ballot? You have to they all line up? Well, if you have 100,000 ballots and you lose one or two, okay, let's make sure it's really, really that tight of a system so that we find out that there's no linkages, because when you have a state that is 70-30 for one party or another, if you have leakages, you know, errors in the system, it doesn't matter quite so significantly. But when you get down to a race that it is 49.9 50.1 type race, every single vote matters, every single thing to make sure and that's why we've done a 100% citizenship check of the entire voter rolls. That's the first time that's ever been done state of Georgia, and I did that. That's when we want to make sure we you review any potential allegations of ballot harvesting. We need to make sure that with photo ID for the absentee voting process, we need to make sure that our voter rolls are clean, accurate and up to date. Oh sure. It's very, very tight and accurate, because the differences in some races are going to be so close. We've had Statehouse seats that have been within six to eight votes. That's how close you can be sometimes

**Mark Niesse 30:00**

Right. So the follow up is how do we get there? How do we make it more tight and accurate? Because you do see more variances than one or two, you know, not huge not swinging an election, but you do see, especially in larger counties with more vote, voters that sometimes the numbers might be off by 10 or 50, or something like that, you know, it isn't airtight? How do we improve those processes?

**Brad Raffensperger 30:21**

Well, it's it gets on training, training, training, and then coming back into the audits of everything and reviewing your results, to see that you look at everything, did you catch everything, and then improve that process. And that's what the county election officers are doing right now, in all their offices.

**Nicole Carr 30:40**

We've talked a lot about transparency and the things that are to come and where we've, we've been, since the last election, what happens when facts don't matter to people, when you open when you're as transparent as possible. And you count and you recount the audit and re audit and you examine laws and change laws, and you shape everything up. And the facts don't matter. To people who believe one thing or the other. Where does that put us? Do you have confidence that we come out of this space?

**Brad Raffensperger 31:21**

Well, facts matter to us. facts matter I'm an engineer. So facts matter. Lot. Numbers are really important, particularly in this office. But that's why I wrote a 10 page letter to Congress. They've had it for over a year. No one has still responded to a disputing a that allegation. I wrote a book to set the record straight. It's out there. Also, I haven't gotten any letters from people, Hey, I read your book, and you're wrong. And this point, this point now because people don't want to face cold, hard, brutal fact. Why did 28,000 People skipping the presidential ballot? Why did 33,000 people prefer to vote for their

congressman, then, you know, other people that were on the ballot. So things like that. Those are just facts. And Facts are stubborn thing in a day, we have to learn. That's what it was. But I think that as a Republican, as a conservative, I think when you have a positive, uplifting, aspirational message, and you have within you a spirit of joy, you know, we have some are having some fun, you know, I know that these are really important issues. But boy, when you're weaned on the pickle, and all you ever do is whine and complain, that doesn't attract a lot of people to your cause. So have some fun, enjoy this. You know, I believe that Republicans have the best message we really do. We're talking about financial empowerment of everyone we're talking about. Everyone has the opportunity to live the American dream, we're talking about, we want a great educational system. We want America to be the very best it can be. We want Americans to enjoy the life that they really are hoping for. And so when we lean into that, with principled integrity, and leadership, I think then we'll do just fine. And people I do that day, I think when they go home, yes, they're disappointed. But they probably know, at the end of the day, that this office did what we need to do. And it's just a tough, bitter pill to swallow. And I understand many of my party are still, you know, grieving over it. And that's why I try to be very gentle. But I just need to help them understand that the 20,000 people skipped a presidential ballot, but we checked out all your allegations. They weren't 1000s of dead people there were for those types of things, because facts do matter.

**Nicole Carr** 33:26

They do. But we still saw with all that transparency and laying out the facts. We still on his direction. We still people who aren't willing to take that,

**Brad Raffensperger** 33:39

as people still want to believe Stacey Abrams myth of voter suppression, and yet we had record voter registration record turnout in the 2018 cycle, you know, because

**Nicole Carr** 33:49

we hadn't gotten the bad ones yet. With all the facts. I mean, we're in a different place in this country right now. Are you hopeful that we overcome that?

**Brad Raffensperger** 33:57

Well, I think we are because what we've shown like in Georgia, we actually raised the number of days of early voting. Yes. Just last year, when the General Assembly was working in the day when it came through, was good legislation because it has photo ID additional day of early voting, and now it's all 159 counties. We're going to have security paper, we're gonna have drop boxes that are put into state law for the very first time, lines shorter than one hour, or else next time you've got to bust your precinct in half or add equipment, counties. If they can't get it right, we'll be held accountable. So a lot of good measures of SB 202. But the essence of it is it's never been easy to vote, but we have the appropriate guardrails. That makes it very difficult to cheat and game the system

34:45

Hi, everybody, we're going to take we've got some great questions coming in. So I just wanted to jump in and start asking some of these questions that are coming in from the audience. So along the lines of what Nicole was saying, one of our board members Maria Saporta has a question. How hard

is it to be a Republican in Georgia, when there's still the contingent that continues to stay to say, stop the steel? I think that the messaging there is probably difficult to deal with.

**Brad Raffensperger 35:16**

Well, there's lots of us out there that are principled conservatives, and this is our home. And trust me, there'll be a lot of them a lot more come up to vote. Our party's diverse we have diverse group of pagans, just like the Democratic Party. And so I know this many Democrats that are close to the center line, and they're not real big fans of AOC. And so you know, it is what it is. But at the end of the day, what people do want is they want government to work for them. And so if you look at what we've done in the office of Secretary of State, you're not covered in your corporation for up to three years. If you are a military family, that with a military spouse moving to Georgia, we move you to the front of this license, or your occupational license, professional license. So that's really important. And then we've also shown that we have fair and honest elections. So we'll continue to do those. Those are great Republican principles. I think those are really just great, great values to give every Georgian they have the opportunity to get the professional license to get, you know, to be able to vote. We think those are just things that transcend politics, and just happens to conservative Republican is leading the charge on that Georgia. And that's a good thing, because I believe in Republican principles.

36:29

Thank you, there's a couple of questions coming into about media scrutiny. Can you talk a little bit about the media scrutiny of the past couple of years, and how that may have changed you as a person you may never have? Thought you would face so much national or international attention? So can you talk a little bit about that?

**Brad Raffensperger 36:46**

Well, I read a lot of history books, I understand back in 1770 1780. They, they would don't cuss each other from both political parties. So it's something that is not new to this world. But I do think that people need to understand that they do have biases, you know, they need to really leave that at the door and just write fair articles, or go to the editorial pages. Don't let your slant influence things. I think that's one thing that everyone sees. But it is what it is. And, you know, you just deal with it and move on.

37:18

Did the attention change you though, as a leader or did it? Did it harden us? Often you change your mind on anything, just being in the spotlight so intensely over the past couple of years?

**Brad Raffensperger 37:29**

No, I'm at a point in my life, I think the Lord's changed me, he's in my heart. And I understand that sometimes, you know, people are clamoring for King. And it never worked out too well for Israel, you know. And so the day of the judges, and judges seven, seven, getting only had 300 men. So in my race, I'm looking for 300 people that come alongside me a big way. And I think there's a big groundswell of other, you know, conservative, so look for a good, honest, decent human being that'll do their job.

38:00

There's another question coming in from Mark Lind, did you ever think that a secretary of state you would be harassed and have to have more security to be aware of your own safety?

**Brad Raffensperger 38:10**

No, whenever I always talk to folks always understand that I'm down ballot. But this 2020 cycle just, you know, elevated the position of Secretary of State across the country. I also write about that in my book is that when we went my my staff, we went up to Washington, DC, and we were talking to some of these conservative saying, Folks, we're just getting swamped with all these lawsuits from the left. They basically said, we we feel your pain, but we don't have any money for it. And I think that Republicans didn't understand how important how significant who in the Secretary of State is and what these laws are, and how important it is. So for me to ban ballot harvesting was good to maybe make sure that we got, you know, join ERIC electronic registration information, information center. So we get updated voter rolls, all the things and improvements are really significant. I think now, more Republicans are looking at that. But the answer isn't defined some shill that won't stand on the truth. You're looking for someone that's a principle conservative.

39:14

And back to your book, there's a question about Will you write another book?

**Brad Raffensperger 39:19**

Oh, one was plenty. It would be something a different topic. But I don't know what that would be right now. Right now. I'm pretty busy with the office and also with a reelection campaign.

39:32

Great. Nicole and Mark, back to you. If you have any additional questions for the secretary and the audience. We're running out of time. So if you want to get your questions in please send those now. Oh,

**Mark Niesse 39:43**

I don't want to ignore an audience question about something that I wrote about about election security and whether our voting vulnerable to potential tampering, you know, there is oh On case about this, you have addressed it in that case to some extent. But do you think there are legitimate risks to our voting system? Or do you think it's not such a big risk of somebody being able to somehow and serve malware on to touchscreens and somehow find a way to change boats?

**Brad Raffensperger 40:23**

You're talking about the Halderman report. And Holderman was given actually the security codes, so he had total access to the equipment, and he had it for 12 weeks. And then he comes back with his points, he said well, if you had that kind of access, that you could change things. Well, duh, yeah. And just like the guy that's gonna come in and work on your server, your security system for your house, he can have all the access code. Yeah, I guess he could come back maybe at 2am. And so you don't have that kind of access. But people need to understand that the poll pad during election day is not collected the internet, during early voting, the poll pad does have Wi Fi capability. So if you voted precinct one in the morning, you can't vote a precinct four in the afternoon. So that's the only reason it's encrypted Wi Fi,

the ballot marking devices, just a ballot marking device to print out a ballot. And then the scanner on the back has two flash drives, and a scanner, it's not connected to the internet. And nothing is connect to the internet. At the end of the day, on election day, you press the button, you tabulate the it prints out a piece of paper, that piece of paper and the two flash drives all goes with two election workers and a deputy to the county headquarters. And that's where it's all put together. So nothing's connected to the internet. But Mark, here's the point about all that. When you print out the ballot, let's say you voted for candidate A, and all of a sudden it says Candidate B. Well, then you're gonna say something happened, you go back to the election worker and said, Hey, got the wrong person here. I don't know what happened. And then then you didn't recognize that discrepancy. It didn't happen. Because in the 2020 election, we did a 100% hand recount. But here's what (missed audio briefly) Stacey Abrams and President Trump all want hand marked paper ballots. And I believe that the ballot marking device takes away that opportunity of questioning or asking What exactly did that person, you know, mark on that ballot? Because if you look at what happens with the absentee ballot process, look at how people fill in the bubbles who don't fill in the bubbles, how they circle things to x things and all that. And that's where you end up with questions. And those are the kind of questions that end up being litigated after an election. What I'm trying to do is avoid lawsuits and trying to avoid voter tip, when you press all your selections on the ballot marking device and prints it out. We know what your selections were. And so we don't get into that we avoid lawsuits. So I think that we made the right choice. The General Assembly was right when they've selected, you know, a ballot marking device machine. I think that Mr. Haldeman, Dr. Halderman is way off base, you have 12 weeks to look for stuff. I'm sure that anyone has that kind of unlimited access to do something. But it's not real world.

**Nicole Carr 42:58**

What impact would that have on the adjudication process? Because we know we did a lot of explaining about the bipartisan panel that goes better in question, and maybe there was a marking outside of a bubble or something. And they come to a consensus and move that that went on for the final count. Does that? Does that change anything with the current process? Well,

**Brad Raffensperger 43:20**

if you actually work with hand marked paper ballots, that means that a lot more ballots, because it won't be just the early vote ballots, which represent six to 10% of all the ballots means the other 90%. Now, we'll have more of adjudication of those things. So you'll have two people, bipartisan the panel's arguing, and then that's where to go then to courts and arguing about this. Let's throw this out. And you're gonna end up with disenfranchisement of voters. And I don't support that at all. Ballot marking device, you know exactly who that is.

**Mark Niesse 43:53**

Sure, you know, back to SB 202. There's this one part of it, people to cast out of precinct provisional ballots. And if you show up at the election workers will tell you, you have to go to your home precinct or else your vote won't count, unless it's in the last two hours before polls close. Do you think that will cause a hindrance to voters? Do you think that will result in them not having their votes counted?

**Brad Raffensperger 44:24**

No, I think it's actually a better process. And the general assembly was very moderate in you know, their modification. They say, after five o'clock, then you can vote out a precinct. But what was happening, it was actually becoming a political strategy, just go anywhere and vote. But in effect, what you're telling voters is that you're disenfranchised when you went to another precinct that all those other ballots that were not at that precinct level, they wouldn't count top of the ticket would and the campaigns that were doing that only cared about was the top of the top of the ticket. And so this way, you don't disenfranchise voters all of the other of races that are out there. But also, you'd end up with a big line over this one precinct because they're not supposed to be voting there. So when people go to their precinct, then the counties can manage that, because they know how many voters they expect, how many machines we need. So the process just works a whole lot better. And that's the purpose of what we did. And so that's something that's been in place, with no out of precinct voting in both Florida and Arizona. We modified it, and moderated it so that after five o'clock, you can vote out a precinct

**Nicole Carr** 45:29

does that underline especially the importance of training in the county election offices, too, because I know it's some of those elections investigations. People are saying, well, I was instructed to do this or that or go, here they are with the provisional process, I only did what I was told. Right, that lends itself to

**Brad Raffensperger** 45:48

that comes back to training, and a lot of problems in some of the larger counties, predominantly Fulton County, it gets back to training, training and training. And the challenge you have is that we have to really have poll workers come back and work several elections. If it's your first election, right out of the chute. There's an awful lot to learn that it does take an awful lot of training, having experienced poll managers that they're getting it right. And so counties like Fulton County, they need a total top down, reorganization starts at the top building a strong team than the next level so that they can run their elections. But it does get back to, you know, poll worker training but also voters need to look at, you have your registration card that tells you what precinct you vote at. Where are you going to go? Is it to a fire station? Is it to a library where exactly and that's where you need to show up that.

46:36

We have another board members question in here from foskett asking some conservative media has attacked the ERIC or verification system that Georgia in many states belong to and have advocated that states abandon it. We want to hear your thoughts on that.

**Brad Raffensperger** 46:55

Well, one of my conservative secretaries of state fellow conservative Secretary of State of Alabama, John Merrow, push back big time about that allegation, because he said it's allowed them to clean up the voter roll, we're actually getting better data. Because right now, because we're part of areas, if you move to any of the southeastern states, except Tennessee is not going to 31 states, if you move away from Georgia and move to say, Texas, North Carolina or Florida, at register there will get notification we can start taking off the voter rolls. Likewise, if you move from Texas and move to Georgia, we tell Texas that this person has come here registered Texas can keep their voter rolls, we get better death records, we can really keep our voter rolls updated. If you don't have that you're gonna have dirty list. And so the

conspiracy theory and this has not been funded by any outside organization. And we had a grant program before we remember from Pew that got its funding up Eric is doing an excellent job. We have better voter rolls, a better list. and thats because of it.

**Mark Niesse** 48:00

Very good, very good. Well, I think that's great. Christie, would you like to take over? Thank you so much, Mr. Secretary. Those are

48:10

thank you so much. To Secretary Raffensperger, Nicole Carrfor oh, cool car from ProPublica and Morgan easy from the AJC. It's been a great discussion today. We appreciate your time. Thanks for everybody who joined us this morning. You can visit Atlanta press club.org to see our upcoming events and this event will be posted in its entirety online later today. Thanks, everybody.

**Brad Raffensperger** 48:33

Oh, glad to have you. recording stopped. Thank y'all.

**Mark Niesse** 48:45

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.